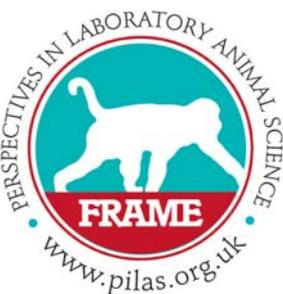


# PiLAS

## Laboratory Animal Science and the Use of Scientific Knowledge



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The *World Conference on Science for the Twenty-first Century: A New Commitment*, took place on 26 June to 1 July 1999 in Budapest, Hungary, under the auspices of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the International Council for Science (ICSU). The participants produced a very interesting 7-page, 46-paragraph *Declaration on Science and the Use of Scientific Knowledge*, which is well worth reading.<sup>1</sup> There were no specific references to laboratory animal experimentation, but a number of the general points made have implications in terms of this particular form of scientific activity, and deserve to be given careful consideration. For example:

- Preamble para 4: *Today, whilst unprecedented advances in the sciences are foreseen, there is a need for a vigorous and informed democratic debate on the production and use of scientific knowledge. The scientific community and decision-makers should seek the strengthening of public trust and support for science through such a debate. Greater interdisciplinary efforts, involving both natural and social sciences, are a prerequisite for dealing with ethical, social, cultural, environmental, gender, economic and health issues. Enhancing the role of science for a more equitable, prosperous and sustainable world requires the long-term commitment of all stakeholders, public and private, through greater investment, the appropriate review of investment priorities, and the sharing of scientific knowledge.*
- Consideration para 21: *That scientists with other major actors have a special responsibility for seeking to avert applications of science which are ethically wrong or have an adverse impact.*
- Consideration para 22: *The need to practise and apply the sciences in line with appropriate ethical requirements developed on the basis of an enhanced public debate.*
- Consideration 23: *That the pursuit of science and the use of scientific knowledge should respect and maintain life in all its diversity, as well as the life-support systems of our planet.*
- Proclamation 31: *The essence of scientific thinking is the ability to examine problems from different perspectives and seek explanations of natural and social phenomena, constantly submitted to critical analysis. Science thus relies on critical and free thinking, which is essential in a democratic world.*
- Proclamation 40: *A free flow of information on all possible uses and consequences of new discoveries and newly developed technologies should be secured, so that ethical issues can be debated in an appropriate way.*
- Proclamation 41: *All scientists should commit themselves to high ethical standards, and a code of ethics based on relevant norms*

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*enshrined in international human rights instruments should be established for scientific professions. The social responsibility of scientists requires that they maintain high standards of scientific integrity and quality control, share their knowledge, communicate with the public and educate the younger generation.*

The challenge to all stakeholders in laboratory animal science – be they scientists, research organisations, industries, industry associations, funding bodies, medical research charities, patient associations, politicians, governments, animal welfare

activists or antivivisectionists – is to strive to work, not as isolated parties, but together, to live up to the expectations of those who met in Budapest in 1999. The question that all these stakeholders must not be allowed to avoid is this: *In all honesty, is this challenge being met?*

<sup>1</sup> Anon. (1999). *World Conference on Science Declaration on Science and the Use of Scientific Knowledge*, 7pp. Paris, France: UNESCO. Available at: [http://www.unesco.org/science/wcs/eng/declaration\\_e.htm](http://www.unesco.org/science/wcs/eng/declaration_e.htm)